

This pamphlet is designed to ease the anxieties of an Air Force manager who faces the time crunch, be he or she a first line supervisor striving at the worker level, an action officer running the corridors of Washington, or a commander roosting over any size unit. Resources used to compile these pages were synthesized for a military environment from American industrial management texts. First, the problem and recognition of time wasters are brought to the forefront. This is followed by a discussion on how to better manage one's life and a compendium of techniques on how to deal with such time wasters as phone calls, visitors, correspondence, and meetings. A final section deals with how to save time by effectively employing delegation. Through this pamphlet, the reader should realize that much of what is offered for more efficient time management in industry can be adapted to the ever increasingly hectic workload being foreseen by many Air Force managers in these times of decreasing resources.

END OF ABSTRACT

Embodied within these few pages are three major aspirations: first, that the reader will gain some insight as to his/her problems with time and what factors are causing him/her to waste time; second, that the reader will acquire for his/her own use some of the practical hints and techniques offered to save and manage time more effectively; and third, that the reader will develop his/her own means of coping with time, thus relieving some of his/her tensions.

To these aims, the pamphlet is structured as follows:

- Sections 1 and 2 uncover the depth and width of the problem of effective time management and help the reader to reveal his contributions to the problem.
- Section 3 attempts to realign one's way of thinking about and then attacking the problem.
- Sections 4, 5, and 6 offer some practical means of more effectively utilizing one's day.

Thus, if time is a constraint in reading this work, one might read first Sections 4, 5, and 6 with emphasis on the hints and techniques in bullet (*) format. Through applying the bullet techniques, ample time should be available to concentrate on the remainder of this pamphlet.

END OF IN BRIEF

"Time is life. It is irreversible and irreplaceable. To waste your time is to waste your life, but, to master your time is to master your life and make the most of it."

Alan Lakein (7)

"Time is our scarcest resource and unless it is managed, nothing else can be managed."

Peter Drucher (4)

"Know the true value of time; snatch, seize, and enjoy every moment of it. No idleness, no laziness, no procrastination: never put off till tomorrow what you can do today."

Lord Chesterfield

"Do not squander time, for it is the stuff life is made of."

Ben Franklin

"An occasional evening working late is a small price to pay for the privilege and emoluments of one's position."

Chester Burger (3)

END OF PROLOGUE

"Decisions should not be made by weary men with tired brains."

Chester Burger (3)

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Do any of us have enough time? I am sure the majority of us would respond with a resounding "No!" Yet, paradoxically we have all the time there is. We consume it at a rate of sixty seconds per minute--no more, no less. Time is a commodity that cannot be stored, bought, or substituted. And as our work load increases--as it will in these times of tightening Air Force personnel restraints--it would behoove each of us to begin to work a bit smarter rather than harder. In other words, instead of working longer we need to work more effectively. Most of us realize we will not be able to significantly reduce the work load delegated to us, but we can attempt to more effectively manage that work load in relation to time.

Too many of us already get wrapped around the axle with our jobs, spending perhaps ten to fourteen hours a day and never getting ahead. We are like a prairie fire department in a draught, putting out one brush fire after another. We're constantly operating in the 'crunch mode' of crisis management. We find ourselves harried, overworked, overstressed, facing unanticipated catastrophes speckled with an occasional outbreak of fear, panic, or pure terror. (11:3) We come away from our jobs having expended a great deal of energy, achieved tremendous velocities, but often aren't sure of the direction we went. And for those Air Force

managers who haven't yet experienced this feeling, the future holds the probability that they will. For as we know, our national budget cannot contend with the continually rising DOD personnel costs, and we are already seeing actions to cut our manpower and dollar resources without, I must add, cutting the work that needs to be done. For the non-mathematicians, that equates to doing a great deal more with less.

Along with our problem of being overworked is the fact that too many of us confuse our activity with results. That is, we often produce a great deal of activity without many accomplishments. (11:5) Oddly enough, observations show that there is no direct relationship between hard work and positive accomplishments. (2:10) Furthermore, the harder and longer we work, the less effective we become. We begin to make decisions when we're tired, rushed, or confused. We spend more time working than is really necessary or perhaps good for us. (14:54) Again, it behooves each of us to learn to work smarter rather than harder and longer.

Now that we have a feel for the scope of the problem, let's see what causes the time crunch and what can be done about it.

END OF SECTION

"Literature on time management tends to portray the manager as an unarmed, rotund merchant passing through a thicket filled with surreptitious time robbers."

Ross A. Webber (10)

TIME WASTERS

All of us can undoubtedly make a list of the non-productive "robbers" which Ross Webber feels steal our time and keep us from getting as much work done as we'd like. The majority of us would start by listing such items as

- Briefings
- Phone Calls
- Lengthy and Unnecessary Correspondence
- Visitors

- Subordinates Bypassing the Chain of Command
- Excess Red Tape
- Crisis Projects
- Boss' Pet Projects
- Secretaries

The truth is all these items are external to our personal control. How many of us will reach further within ourselves for that list of items we directly control. Such self-generated, internal, time wasters are

- Procrastination
- Long Coffee Breaks
- Lack of Priorities
- Lack of Delegation
- Socializing
- Premature Fatigue
- Open-Door Policies
- Poor Filing Techniques
- Misplaced Items
- Poor Organization
- Lack of Self-Discipline

As can be seen there are a number of contributors to time wasting over which we do have control. This pamphlet offers ways to control not only the internal wasters but also offers methods and techniques to affect the external time wasters as well.

If you are not convinced that you are affected a great deal by these internal and external time wasters try this little exercise. For two weeks--ten duty days--keep a log (sheet of paper, desk calender, etc.) of how each twenty or thirty minute block of your work day is spent. Compute at the end of two weeks how much time was spent on time wasters. If it turns out that you are wasting less than twenty percent of your duty day, consider yourself as an effective time manager and read no further.

However, if you're like most Air Force managers, I'm sure you'll agree there is room for improvement in your managing of time. The first logical step after realizing the problem is to get organized. Section III offers some suggestions in that regard.

END OF SECTION - Go on to Section 3 - Planning & Organizing

"Good Planning -- a careful blending of horse sense with imagination followed by a strong dash of action and mindedness to get the plan working."

Don Mitchell (General Telephone)

PLANNING & ORGANIZING

One of the attributes which differentiates a "workaholic" from an effective manager is his ability to use time well in achieving objectives instead of aimless activities. The obvious intent of planning and organizing our time is to achieve objectives and acquire more time for ourselves, our family, our friends and our dreams.(7:9) For this I will suggest and expound upon accomplishing the following steps:

- Establishing Objectives and Goals
- Assigning Priorities to our Goals
- Establishing Activities to Complete our Objectives
- Applying Pareto's Principle
- Scheduling Activities
- Accomplishing Activities

This approach to planning and organizing is adapted from the works of Alan Lakein, a Harvard Business School graduate with an extensive background in industrial management consulting. (7) Lets begin by taking a look at establishing some goals for our lives.

Life's Goals

Lakein believes the first step in planning and organizing our life is to figure what we want out of our present job, our career, our families, our relationships with others -- our life in general. Therefore, Lakein suggests we take just two minutes to write out what we wish to achieve in life. Spend a couple more minutes editing the list and adding any additional goals. Then, do the same for what we hope to accomplish in the next three years. Finally write

down what we would attempt to accomplish if we knew today that we only had six months to live. We should then take some additional time to edit and add any last minute additions to all three lists, attempting to refine the objectives in order to represent our true preferences.

Lakein realizes that conflicts may occur among various goals. For instance, spending more time advancing a career may conflict with spending more time with the family. But he professes that such competition for our attention can later stimulate us to increase the quality of the time we spend on each. Additionally, conflicts may resolve themselves when we move on to Lakein's second step, assigning priorities to our goals. (7:31-36)

Priority of Goals

He recommends that we take our first list (our lifetime goals) and assign a priority to each one such as A-1 for the most important, A-2 for the second most important and so on. The same can be done for the three year and six month lists. After comparing these lists, the next exercise is to intermesh the A-1s, A-2s, etc., and determine which again ranks as the most important goal, second most important, third most important and so on. Thus we have established a new list of 'prioritized' A goals. This ordered list should then be posted where it can be viewed daily and revised as necessary. Lakein suggests revising our A goals often. Lifetime goals should be reevaluated at least once a year, perhaps each birthday, the day we most consciously realize another year has past. (7:36)

Activities

Our next step is to quite simply determine and draft out all the activities necessary to accomplish our 'prioritized' A goals. All these activities should be challenging yet achievable. (7:41) For example, if one of our lifetime goals is to have a healthier life, the list of activities to achieve that goal may include (1) buying new athletic gear, (2) jogging two miles three times a week, (3) dieting to lose those ten extra pounds, and (4) quitting cigarettes. We may now run into a problem. In order to achieve our A goals we may have listed more activities than we could possibly have time for. Regardless, Lakein suggests we choose ten or twelve of the most potential activities to work on each week. (7:44) In order to help us determine which activities to choose, let us examine a phenomenon called Pareto's Principle which may save us a great deal of consternation and valuable time while still allowing us to accomplish our goals.

Pareto's Principle

Vilfredo Pareto was an Italian economist and sociologist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It appeared to him early in his diligent studies that roughly eighty percent of the wealth of his nation belonged to only twenty percent of the population. (9:227) He and subsequent researchers have surmised that this eighty-twenty split appears throughout other facets of life such as

- 80% of sales are made by 20% of the salesmen (5:76)
- 80% of sales go to 20% of the customers (5:76)
- 80% of absenteeism results from 20% of the employees (5:76)
- 80% of sick leave is taken by 20% of the employees (7:84)
- 80% of telephone calls come from 20% of all callers (7:84)
- 80% of a teachers time is taken up by only 20% of the students (5:76)
- 80% of a group discussion is presented by 20% of those present (5:76)
- 80% of our dinners repeat 20% of our favorites recipes (18:46)

Thus by protracting Pareto's concept we can expect to derive approximately eighty percent of the results or value by accomplishing twenty percent of the activities we have listed. (5:75) In the words of Joseph Juran, "We can select the vital few among the trivial many."

Pictorially, Pareto's Principle looks like Fig. 1.

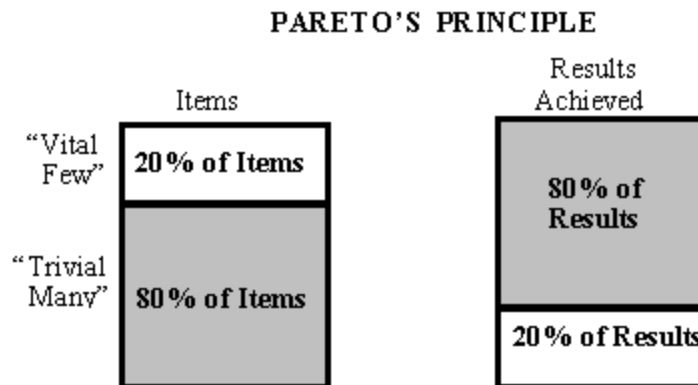


Figure 1

(2:16)

Basically, out of a list of ten items, doing two will yield nearly eighty percent of the value. (7:84) Therefore, we need to review our list of activities and determine which are the vital few that will provide us the maximum value towards accomplishing our most desired goals.

Our next task then is merely to schedule these activities which will allow us to work towards achieving our new list of life's goals.

Scheduling

As we attempt to squeeze any of these activities into our schedule, many of us may face a dilemma. Few of us have the time to even dream of adding futuristic lifetime goal activities to our already overworked schedule. For after all, our time is presently consumed with essential activities such as sleeping and eating; attending social obligations, and getting to and from work; or with previous commitments such as what got started yesterday, last week, or last month. If that wasn't enough, we constantly get bombarded with interruptions and crises from all sides and simply don't have long enough periods of free time to work on any of these additional, neatly 'prioritized' activities. (7:47- 49)

The answer to this dilemma is made quite clear for us by Lakein and reverberated by other management consultants such as Chester Burger, Alec MacKenzie and Peter Drucker. The secret is no matter how busy we are, we must always take time to PLAN. (7:40) By failing to take ten or twenty minutes each day to plan all our foreseeable activities, we are not likely to free any time to work towards our lifetime A goals or for that matter arrange time for any of our other activities.

This leads us to a need for lesser important B and C category goals and their associated activities. These are tasks which need to be achieved but are not directly associated with our life's goals and A activities. Thus, B items are those which have importance, if not urgency, and C items are those of lower value. (7:25) B and C items could be items generated by those seemingly endless crises and interruptions mentioned earlier. Cs are typically items that can be deferred for the present time, but may become Bs or even As later on or disappear entirely. For example, submitting our annual tax return may be a C goal on 1 January, and B goal on 15 March and an A goal on 14 April because failure to submit it by 15 April might conflict with one of our lifetime goals to avoid wasted years in confinement.

In a similar manner as with our A goals and associated activities, we must take these B and C items, assign priorities to them, establish activities to accomplish them, and apply Pareto's Principle to attempt to determine which are most worthwhile. So this planning and organizing leaves us with a "to do list" of 'prioritized' activities, i.e., A-1, A-2, A-3, .. associated with our life's goals and B-1, B-2, B-3, .. C-1, C-2, C-3 .. associated with our daily schedule.

A technique which might be beneficial at this point is to use a pocket style day calendar or date book to keep track of our "to do list." A variety of appropriate pocket calendar books are offered by Day Timers of Allentown, Pennsylvania and may soon become available through Air Force supply channels. Such a book provides us with a handy reference for the activities we need to accomplish, along with the day broken down into time increments. This type of book can also be a quick and handy reference for names, phone numbers, often needed facts and a place to jot down ideas, appointments, TDY expenses, subordinates vacations, etc. In addition, the smaller version of these books fits legally in any uniform shirt pocket.

Finally, we can start realistically scheduling our activities. Some of them will be time fixed, such as jogging at lunch, while other activities we must try to fit in wherever we can. As soon as we compare our to do list with our day calendar, which is perhaps speckled with pre-commitments, we realize our next problem is finding what is often termed "Discretionary Time." Discretionary Time is that time which we can control ourselves, and as middle managers that might be only one-third to one-fourth of our duty day (for top managers even less). Discretionary Time then becomes a valuable, irreplaceable resource to be invested - invested in terms of the future through achieving some A goals and not solely used for current pressures. (10:158-161) Regrettably though, the majority of our day is taken up by what is termed Response Time or time not under our control, i.e., job imposed or fixed time. (2:11)

So with a feeling of what needs to be done in terms of our "to do list" and the Discretionary Time that we have available, our next task is to estimate how much time each of our 'prioritized' tasks will take. If possible we should group tasks that are similar, and we should not schedule more than a ninety minute block of our Discretionary Time for even the most difficult task. Any more than ninety minutes on one project tends to result in diminishing returns. (4:47) As time goes on we should become fairly accurate at 'guesstimating' the required time for activities especially for routine items. All that needs to be done then is to fill each days Discretionary Time with our 'prioritized' activities.

Ideally, we would like to schedule our activities considering not only our Discretionary Time but also our most effective or productive period of the day. Some of us are perhaps "early birds" who get the most out of the first few hours of the day while others may be "slow starters" getting the most out of the later hours. We should attempt to determine our most productive hours. Then we should attempt to arrange this time with our discretionary time and schedule the most worthwhile or difficult task during this most productive time. In other

words, we can concentrate on those "vital few" items during a period which is most productive.(10:74) For example, our effectiveness curve for a day might look like Figure 2.

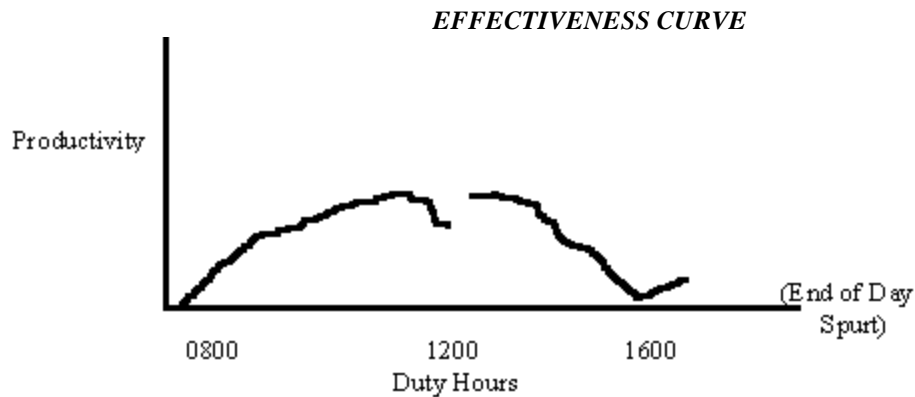


Figure 2

In this figure, the person should attempt to make his Discretionary Time from 0930 till 1130 and schedule the task offering the most value during this period.

Here are some additional techniques which may make this scheduling more efficient:

Organize activities and plan a schedule the first thing during the day while fresh. (2:37)

On Friday or Sunday, plan the following week. (22:5)

Attempt to schedule a quiet hour relatively free from interruptions early in the day. (21:44)

Schedule tougher jobs in the morning while fresh.

Out of every two hours leave the last half hour free to adjust for emergencies, unscheduled visitors, phone calls, and other interruptions.

Twenty slugs, of ten minutes each, spent on an important job are rarely as productive as sixty minutes spent in one concentrated chunk. (21:4)

Maintain spontaneity and flexibility.

Schedule with importance first and urgency second. Studies show urgents are seldom important and important are seldom urgent. (5:83)

Be cautious of scheduling C activities before Bs and As. (7:55)

Find some time for A activities simply by reducing Cs. Some Cs, call them "CZ's", can be deferred indefinitely. (7:86-87)

Don't let busy work block out planning, organizing, or scheduling. (5:83)

So in a short amount of time we have done the planning and organizing necessary to get a firm handle on what we wish to accomplish during our days activities. Chester Burger, a renown management consultant, believes we can save as much as one hundred hours yearly, two duty weeks, through planning and scheduling alone. Now that we have our activities scheduled, we must do them.

Accomplishment

Besides finding time to do the things we need to do we are often faced with another problem -- some tasks, although necessary, are just downright unpleasant. We would just as soon put them off regardless of their priority. A beneficial way to start each day then is by doing an unpleasant task from our "to do list." This new habit can soon become self-reinforcing and result in giving us a certain enthusiastic, euphoric feeling. (5:88) If we find this habit change hard to make, perhaps we can soften our reluctance to do these unpleasant, yet necessary tasks by first doing the most interesting parts of them. (18:46) Or we can get started by doing only five or ten minutes worth of an unpleasant or seemingly unconquerable task. After all, we can work on anything for ten minutes regardless of how unpleasant. (7:130) It might further benefit us to realize how much greater and longer lasting the unpleasantness of not accomplishing these activities would be if further postponed. (7:158)

Another worthwhile recommendation is that we concentrate on only one activity at a time, hopefully to the point that we can complete it. Otherwise, we lose valuable time refamiliarizing ourselves with the activity at a later date. (2:37)

Another important consideration in doing our activities is to establish deadlines. Even if an activity already has a deadline, we should establish an earlier one for ourselves. Such deadlines act as self-reminders. Whether we meet them or not, they give us a target to shoot for.

From time to time throughout the day, if we refer to our "to do list", we can keep ourselves on track and jog our memories as to what we have left to accomplish. If, as the case may often be, we don't complete all the items on our list we must remain flexible. Hopefully, if we have planned and organized well, we have accomplished some of the most productive and important activities. If there are any leftovers, we can merely prioritize them for the next day or scrap them if they don't need doing -- the CZ's mentioned earlier. If an item goes from list

to list day after day, either it really doesn't need doing or we are really procrastinating on an unpleasant task. (5:53)

Let us now sharpen the edge of effective time management by viewing and grasping some of the methods, techniques, and hints for dealing with such time consumers as visitors, phone calls, and correspondence.

END OF SECTION - Go on to Section 4 - Managing Interruptions

"Concentration -- the courage to impose on time and events ones own decision as to what really matters and comes first."

Peter Drucker (5)

**MANAGING INTERRUPTIONS, CORRESPONDENCE,
AND THE SECRETARY OR CLERK**

Under each topic of this section are listed a number of time effective techniques set off in bullet format. If time is a constraint in reading this manuscript, the most benefit will be gained by scanning and attempting to grasp these techniques. By applying a few of these techniques, additional time should be available to more deeply delve into the remainder of this pamphlet.

Visitors

At times it seems we are practically overrun with visitors interrupting our daily activities. As commanders we have our "Open Door Policy", as staff officers we interrupt or are interrupted by fellow staffers unwilling to get started on the next project, as subordinates the boss comes in to chat over trivial matters and as bosses we likewise chat with subordinates. Interruptions often make us nervous and tense; we have trouble getting back to work. Besides, our minds are too occupied to listen carefully, and sometimes we even make visitors sorry they ever came. (7:112) Regardless of how long the interruption lasts, it takes each of us a bit of time to get back on course, to reestablish our chain of thought again. (6:47) In any case, such interruptions do take time away from us accomplishing more important tasks. If there is any doubt, recall our time log exercise and realize how much of the day was taken up by such interruptions. Below are listed some methods to help control such time wasters:

- * If we have a secretary or clerk, that person should screen visitors and, whenever possible, set our appointments. (6:88)
- * If we have an open door policy, we should question why and its worth. Is it causing too many interruptions? Would scheduling visitors be more beneficial to both parties? (After all, would we walk in on our boss anytime of the day?) (20:216)
- * We can greet interrupters and or visitors by remaining standing in hopes of keeping the visit short. (20:47)
- * We can answer, "Got a minute?" with "What is it?" "It all depends." "Can it wait?" "Lets talk later." "Let's get together for lunch." or, "No, not right now, but I can give you a call later." (Hopefully the reason for the "Got a minute?" may disappear.) (12:17)
- * We can cut conversations short courteously with, Certainly was kind of you to come in and tell me about this. I appreciate the time you gave me. Or, I have someone else waiting. If that doesn't work, we can key our clerk or secretary to come in with a message requiring our immediate attention. (3:40- 41)
- * We can stop dropping in on our boss or for that matter our subordinates. We can instead call for an appointment thereby setting an example. (6:22)
- * We can avoid taking calls when we have visitors. (6:29)
- * If we are real brave, we can mention to our superiors and other echelon staffers that we are trying to make more efficient use of our time and would appreciate not being interrupted during certain potentially productive periods. (2:37)
- * We can insist on meeting subordinates in their offices. Thus, we (1) pick the time, (2) maintain control of the situation, (3) are near the problem, files, blueprints, etc., and (4) pay them a compliment. (6:88)

"Parkinsons Second Law -- Other things being equal, time will be spent on items to be discussed in inverse relationship of their importance."

Don't get the feeling we've solved this problem; regardless of how hard we try or how many techniques we apply, people interruptions are not going to disappear. After all, some visitors are indeed important and command our time, courtesy, and respect. Industrial managers aren't going to run out their best customers or sales manager; likewise, we in the Air Force aren't going to shoo away higher ranking officers or a subordinate with a sincere problem. Besides as conscientious managers we shouldn't forget to take the time occasionally for leisurely conversations with our subordinates to learn about their jobs, opportunities, suggestions, etc. (4:31)

Phone Calls

Many of us would agree that a larger portion of our most annoying interruptions come from the phone rather than visitors. The phone was the device that was going to make managing so much easier and convenient. How many times has the ring of the phone broken one of our most inspirational chains of thought, or sidetracked us onto another project or problem? Or worse yet, our best friend has called up to chat because he too didn't feel like getting started on an unpleasant job. Industrial studies indicate that an average of twenty-five percent of an executives day is spent on the phone and approximately one-third of that time is non-productive. (17:754) Additional statistics reflect that less than one-fifth of industrial managers have their clerks or secretaries place outgoing calls for them. That in turn wastes more expensive executive time getting wrong numbers, busy signals, messages to call back, or "your party is not in." (2:12)

How nice it would be to believe we could live without the phone, but the simple truth is we can't live without the beastly system. So what can we do to keep it from biting into our time? Again, here are a few tips from America's industry and its management consultants.

- * We can allow our secretary or clerk to screen phone calls (much like visitors) and determine which should come through immediately, which require taking a message for call back, which require no response, or which require hanging up. (9:18)

- * If we don't have a secretary or clerk and need a half hour away from the ringing of the phone, try dialing one's own number and leaving the phone off the hook. (7:113)

* We need to get to the point early in phone conversations. (6:97)

* We can use call back procedures, setting aside blocks of time such as 1130 or 1600 to return calls. This minimizes our interruptions, allows us to prepare information for the return call, and cuts down on the chatting time as most people are ready for lunch or to go home at such times. (It might help to explain to superiors were trying to be more effective.) (5:50)

* We can cut dragging conversations short by indicating "I'm getting signals, boss wants to see me" or we can fake long distance phone line problems, i.e., hang up. (20:46)

* We shouldn't answer the phone when we are on the way to an appointment. It may cause us to be late, and it isn't fair to the caller to rush him. (2:37)

* When we have more than one party to call on a subject, we can use a conference call. It encourages interaction. (5:25)

*We can teach our clerk or secretary to use the line, "Let me see if I can interrupt him." This usually gets a response quickly from the caller. (6:94)

Joseph Tricket sums up telephone interruptions fairly well. "No one expects a physician or surgeon to answer the phone during an examination or operation. No jurist is expected to answer the phone while in court. No professor is expected to answer his phone while teaching a class. Why, then, should an important business executive be expected to be always "on tap" and available by phone." (6:96)

Correspondence

How many of us would like to see the bottom of our in-basket more often, or to find time to keep up with the periodicals that flow through our office, or even be able to find something in our files quickly? Truth is, we exist in a paperwork jungle where the animals thrive on memos, copies for the files, newsletters, minutes to meetings, and more. So how do we survive?

In handling this mass of finely pressed wood pulp, most management consultants recommend we first get a big enough waste basket to hold all that we can feed it and place it near our desk so we don't miss it when we start pitching. (6:69)

The first place to start pitching is our files. Few of us can admit that we understand our file systems as well as our clerk or secretary. Yet, it certainly would behoove us to learn, especially for those occasional after-hour sessions when we need some supporting or reference data. The logical thing for us to do then is to first look at our files, see if we can make them thinner and simpler by perhaps reducing the number of file subdivisions. This act might decrease the chances of pieces getting lost. (5:42) Then we can sort through each item in our files and question the need to retain it. Waste basket whatever we can, keeping in mind that if we ever do need something we've pitched we can get a copy from the originator. Business studies show that an average office can discard two-thirds to three-quarters of what they have in their files. (5:118) So, ask the question, "Does each piece we keep in our files help to achieve results for us?" And then periodically, say monthly, we should, with our clerk or secretary, re-inventory our files and practice waste-basketting once again. (6:77) In general, we can discard the following:

- Memos for upcoming conferences after our calendar is marked.
- Extra copies of anything.
- Anything recorded or filed elsewhere. (9:159)

We can retain:

- Key periodic reports.
- Queries and replies.
- Follow-up ideas.
- Evidence for building a case.
- Key reference materials.
- Carbons of own memos. (9:159)

After a good house cleaning, the simplest way to keep our files to a minimum is to analyze the correspondence as it comes across our desk. If we look at each piece in terms of how we can get rid of it, it should result in us keeping only what is absolutely necessary. (23:31)

Of course we can't file or waste basket all our correspondence. Some need replies or action. Edwin Bliss, in his book *Getting Things Done* (1:-) and other consultants present some most useful techniques for handling correspondence. To paraphrase:

- If possible we should have incoming mail screened and sorted. If we open our own mail, we should sort as soon as we open it (with waste basket close at hand).

- We should (1) handle each piece only once, (2) avoid paper shuffling, (3) do whatever has to be done (checking, forwarding, phoning, replying) immediately instead of postponing action and (4) allow time for these actions when handling the day's correspondence.

- Date filed correspondence with a 'waste basket' date.

- If a brief reply is possible, we should write it on the incoming memo or letter, use a photo copy for the file, and return the original to the sender.

- We can develop form letters and form paragraphs for routine correspondence.

- In replying, we shouldn't make frequent revisions. Perfection is time consuming.

- We should get to the point in our replies - be concise.

- If the reply is going to be long we should make an outline before starting.

- We should avoid unnecessary copies. They waste others' time to make, distribute, file, and read.

- For internal routine correspondence we can try form memos or better yet, "speed-letter" forms with carbons already inserted and with space for a reply.

- We should, if necessary, also 'prioritized' correspondence. As are immediate. Bs become letters, memos, etc., which must be disposed of in, say, a week. Cs have no special deadline. (9:148)

- We shouldn't write a reply when a phone call will do, especially if there is something to be negotiated, or ideas to be exchanged. We can do it by phone or in person instead of on paper. (After all, its cheaper.)

- We should use memos only to announce, to remind, to confirm, or to clarify.

- We should use short terse words, not perpetrate polysyllabic obfuscation. (1:24)

Before closing this section on correspondence a word or two on reading material is necessary. In reading the endless stream of material such as periodicals, newsletters, IG reports, meeting minutes, conference reports, etc., that flow across our desk, we can either designate someone to scan and highlight them for the offices interest (see Section 6, or Delegation), or if necessary, we can do the same ourselves. The important thing to remember is to scan them looking for relevant areas and key points. We should retain only those that are necessary for future reference. Finally, it would benefit all who work with us to keep the periodical reading material out of sight in order to keep from being tempted or distracted (procrastination needs no crutches). (5:74)

Clerk or Secretaries Responsibilities

Undoubtedly the greatest possible time saver for an over worked manager is an efficient office clerk or secretary. Such a person is by far our most important subordinate. (6:50) By the same token, an improperly instructed, improperly trained, or unmotivated clerk or secretary can be a managers constant burden. For those of us fortunate enough to have a clerk or secretary, it benefits us to spend the time to properly delegate some of our work AND responsibilities to such a person. I have already touched on some of the ways a secretary can assist us by screening our visitors, handling our appointments, sorting our correspondence, and managing our revised file, but the assistance such a person can give us is truly unlimited. I shall elaborate.

First off, if it is physically possible we should have the secretary or clerk act as a buffer - location wise - between the entrance for visitors and our desk. In that manner our clerk or secretary can screen each person who comes to see us and receive and dispose of them if necessary in a courteous manner. In addition, through such a location, our secretary or clerk can often provide the information to others who do not need to see us personally. (2:24)

Secondly, the assistance most often neglected by clerks or secretaries is their aid in preparing correspondence. By availing them a bit of fresh responsibility, we may find they are often eager and qualified to handle routine replies and initiate drafts on more complex matters. It amazes me that forty percent of the managers in our nation's industries still draft out their own memos and letters. (13:6) I feel if such a survey was conducted in the Air Force, the percentages would be even higher.

We are also reluctant to take advantage of the benefits of either (1) dictating our correspondence to our clerks or secretaries if they are qualified stenographers, or (2) using available dictating machines which any typist can learn to use. Few of us are familiar with the capabilities and limitations associated with this apparent panacea for efficiency. So here are some points we should keep in mind when dictating:

- Gather all necessary backup material, i.e., memos, necessary names, addresses, files, reports, etc.
- Know purpose. What is our precise reason for this particular dictation?
- Prepare an outline. What are our points to cover? Check outline against purpose.
- Be concise, clear, and complete. We should convey our information, then stop.
- Determine and inform the secretary whether this is going to be a rush job, rough draft, memo, report, or whether there'll be attachments, numbered items, etc.
- Spell out confusing words and proper names, also indicate caps, or peculiar punctuation.
- Avoid distracting mannerisms, mumbling, or rushing.

In order to choose which system of dictation might best suit us, here is a comparison. A good stenographer can only absorb about one hour of our noise and shouldn't be kept overtime due to our poor scheduling. (9:152) However, a dictation machine doesn't get paid overtime, is available 24 hours a day, and has no self-consciousness. A machine can be shut off to regroup our thoughts without tying up a steno's time and can be taken on trips (without office rumors). On the other hand, such machines can't supply missing words, provide instant feedback, nor

make corrections or insertions. (9:159-152) Furthermore, we are limited to writing 20-30 words per minute (wpm); a good stenographer can take 60-70 wpm; a dictation machine 150 wpm. Therefore, one hour using a dictating machine is equivalent to five hours of letter writing or two hours of a stenographers time. Furthermore, stenographers can transcribe thirty-three percent faster from a machine than from our longhand or from their shorthand. (6:74)

Concerning the secretary or clerks handling of correspondence, visitors and other duties the following techniques may prove helpful:

- We should let them be responsible for the accuracy of all correspondence instead of wasting our time in extra proofing.

- When we're gone we can mail or call in letters authorizing them to send out the finished product.

- We can allow them to read periodicals, mark in margins, or highlight for the office.

- We should keep their work flowing. Avoid idle hours. If unable, let them go home early. (6:158-169)

- We should allow them to draft as much of what needs to be sent out as possible. (2:24)

- We should allow them to handle some of our research and provide information and facts for us. (2:24)

- We should allow them to take initial actions on messages when we are tied up. (6:29)

Once we have instilled our confidence in our secretary's abilities, the majority will welcome the increased responsibility and feeling of contributing to the team effort. Just a few more general hints to assist our working relationships with these most precious (sic) subordinates:

- * We should not request any service, such as coffee monitor, hosting, etc., that they might resent. (9:180)

* We should be patient as we increase their responsibilities, allowing for errors and explaining details well. (9:169)

* We should never get personal with our secretaries or clerks. There should always be an employer-employee relationship, not a social acquaintance. (9:168)

* If our clerk or secretary is going to make our appointments, we must keep her or him informed of any appointments we have made. (2:36)

* When our secretary serves more than one boss, we have a responsibility to communicate with the others and determine priorities. It is not the clerk or secretary's place to determine the priorities. (6:164)

* A good secretary should read back names and phone numbers when taking messages. (9:180)

* We should be considerate of the job our clerk or secretary does. A little praise goes a long way. (6:167)

Lastly, our clerk or secretary is our key to those times when we need uninterrupted solitude to wade through some of those difficult tasks, be the tasks just thinking something out or counseling a subordinate. A properly instructed secretary can keep those phones or visitors from interrupting almost indefinitely--allow them, they enjoy the power. (20:46)

Now a look at yet another time waster -- meetings.

END OF SECTION - Go on to section 5 - Handling Meetings

HANDLING MEETINGS

The drudge of the Air Force manager must be the time spent preparing for, attending, and reporting on inefficient, irrelevant, and redundant meetings and conferences. There are no figures available for military members' time spent with meetings but the following figures stem from studies conducted in American business:

- The average manager spends 36 days a year in meetings. (23:32)
- He spends 8 days a year getting ready for meetings. (Coupled with point above, that's not bad, when we realize there are only about 200 work days in a year. (23:31)

Surveys indicate that 20% of the time spent at meetings is in exchanging small talk. (16:48)

Additional surveys of managers indicate that they feel 4 out of 5 business meetings could have been canceled. (23:30)

Techniques to control this enormous waste of time are listed below. They are logically broken down into two groups, one for the chairman or arranger of a meeting, and another list for those who are attendees.

Chairman

Alec Mackenzie, provides us the following suggestions for limiting the time wasted on meetings if we are chairing or arranging them. (8) They are separated into categories pertaining to before, during, and after the meeting takes place.

BEFORE

1. Explore alternatives to meeting.
 - a) A responsible decision can often eliminate the need for group action.
 - b) A conference call may substitute for getting together. (Also saves travel funds.)
 - c) Postpone the meeting. Consolidate the agenda with that of a later meeting.
 - d) Ask, "Is this meeting necessary?" If it is not, cancel it.
2. Keep the participants to a minimum. Only those absolutely needed should attend. Inform the others through agendas, surveys, suggestions, and minutes.

3. Choose an appropriate time. Schedule the meeting before lunch, another engagement, or quitting time if this is appropriate to the type meeting being called. (The rush to quit aids in getting decisions.)
4. Choose an appropriate place. Accessibility of location, availability of equipment, size of the room, and so forth are all important.
5. Define the purpose clearly before calling the meeting.
6. Distribute the agenda in advance. This helps the participants prepare--or at least forewarns them.
7. Time-limit the meeting and the agenda (one hour maximum suggested). Allocate a time to each subject proportional to its relative importance, i.e., set priorities.

DURING

1. Start on time. Give warning, then do it. There is no substitute for starting late.
2. Assign time keeping and minutes responsibilities. Keep posted on the time remaining and the amount behind the schedule if any. (Perhaps a clock with the time remaining can be used.) (6:103)
3. Hold a standup meeting, if appropriate. This speeds deliberations.
4. Start with and stick to the agenda. "We're here to...", "The purpose of this meeting is...", "The next point to be decided is . . ., etc."
5. Control interruptions. Allow interruptions for emergency purposes only.
6. Use a meeting evaluation checklists as an occasional spot check. Questions should be answered by each participant before leaving. Was the purpose of the meeting clear? Was the agenda received in advance? Were any materials essential for preparation also received in advance? Did the meeting start on time? If not, why not? Was the agenda followed adequately, or was the meeting allowed to wander from it unnecessarily? Was the purpose achieved? Were assignments and deadlines fixed where appropriate? Of the total meeting

time, what percentage was not effectively utilized? Why? The evaluations, unsigned, should be collected for the chairman's immediate review.

AFTER

1. Expedite the preparation of the minutes. Concise minutes should be completed and distributed within 24 hours if possible. Minutes are also a reminder and a useful follow up tool.

2. Insure that progress reports are made. Uncompleted actions should be listed under "Unfinished Business" on the next meeting's agenda. (31:110-112)

An example of an effective chairmans approach to meetings might offer an even more enlightening approach to handling this time waster:

The senior financial executive of a large organization knew perfectly well that the meetings in his office wasted a lot of time. This man asked all his direct subordinates to every meeting, whatever the topic. As a result the meetings were far too large. And because every participant felt that he had to show interest, everybody asked at least one question -- most of them irrelevant. As a result the meetings stretched on endlessly. But the senior executive had not known, until he asked, that his subordinates too considered the meetings a waste of their time. Aware of the great importance everyone in the organization placed on status and on being "in the know", he had feared that the uninvited men would feel slighted and left out.

Now, however, he satisfies the status needs of his subordinates in a different manner. He sends out a printed form which reads: "I have asked (Smith, Jones, and Robinson) to meet with me (Wednesday at 3) in (the fourth floor conference room) to discuss (next year's capital appropriations budget). Please come if you think that you need the information or want to take part in the discussion. But you will in any event receive, right away, a full summary of the discussion and of any decisions reached together with a request for your comments."

Where formerly a dozen people came and stayed all afternoon, three men and a secretary to take the notes now get the matter over within an hour or so. And no one feels left out. (5:39)

Attendee

On the other hand, if we are to be in attendance at a conference or a meeting, these couple of hints might save us some time:

If there is no need to be there call the chairman or arranger and ask to bow out.

If able, send a representative. This gives a subordinate experience and exposure. (8:110)

As indicated by these last two techniques our thoughts should be focused on how to get out of work entirely. This brings us to the topic and technique of delegation.

END OF SECTION - Go on to section six - Using Delegation

"Delegation--the process of insuring the monkey is on the proper back for care and feeding."

Edwin Bliss

USING DELEGATION

In discussing delegation, my intent is not only to discuss how to pass on part of our workload to our subordinates in order to save us time, but more importantly, to instill increased participation, responsibility, and motivation within our subordinates. After all, as supervisors and managers, one of our primary tasks is to develop our staff. Figures indicate they want just that. The Air Force Quality of Life Survey conducted in 1975 indicated a dissatisfaction with the work members were doing. Specifically, they were dissatisfied with the lack of job responsibility. Ninety-one percent of the officers and seventy-two percent of the enlisted members polled indicated they wanted increased job responsibility (24:319). Therefore, it would befit each of us to become familiar with proper delegation techniques.

First let's determine if delegation is even necessary in the jobs we're holding by answering Alec Mackenzies questions:

- Do we take work home regularly?

- Do we work longer hours than our subordinates?
- Do we spend time doing for others what they could be doing?
- When we return from an absence from the office, do we find our in-baskets full?
- Do we spend time on routine details that others could handle?
- Do we like to keep a finger in every pie?
- Are we unable to keep on top of deadlines? (8:141-142)

If the answer was "yes" to two or more of these questions, read on; there is more to learn about delegating.

So many of us came up through the ranks as operators, doers, and now that we have become managers we find it a bit difficult to spend more time on managing and less on operating. It seems every time we are given a choice between doing or delegating we fall back to doing. (6:134) If we could successfully delegate the majority of our work which our subordinates are capable of accomplishing, according to Neely Gardner studies, we could triple our own output. (6:136) In turn, we would have an opportunity to see just what our subordinates are capable of doing.

BARRIERS TO DELEGATION

We all run into barriers to this apparent utopia offered by delegation. Before we can be successful in this regard, we should recognize where these barriers lie. Alec Mackenzie totals them up fairly well:

BARRIERS IN THE DELEGATOR

- Preference for operating ("doing" mentioned above)
- I can do it better myself fallacy
- Lack of experience in the job or in delegating
- Insecurity
- Fear of being disliked
- Refusal to allow mistakes
- Lack of confidence in subordinates
- Perfectionism leading to over control
- Lack of organizational skill in balancing workload

- Failure to delegate authority commensurate with responsibility
- Uncertainty over task and inability to explain
- Disinclination to develop subordinates
- Failure to establish effective controls and to follow up

BARRIERS IN THE DELEGATEE

- Lack of experience
- Lack of competence
- Avoidance of responsibility
- Overdependence on the boss
- Overload of work
- Immersion in trivia

BARRIERS IN THE SITUATIONS

- One-man-show policy
- No toleration of mistakes
- Criticality of decisions
- Urgency, leaving no time to explain
- Confusion in responsibilities and authority
- Understaffing (8:133-134)

Are any of these barriers familiar? If the above list can aid us in identifying our reluctance to delegating, perhaps the following techniques can help us overcome these barriers:

We shouldn't delegate anything that takes us less time to do than it does to delegate it. (19:756)

We should take special effort in explaining the tasks to be delegated. Unless our subordinates are properly trained, the results could ruin us. After all, when we delegate tasks, the subordinates become extensions of ourselves. (6:141)

As suggested earlier, we can delegate reading of office periodicals. This will help keep subordinates abreast of the latest information, and they can bring to our attention the most important parts of the readings. (2:24)

Whenever we transfer responsibility we must also transfer authority (the right to make decisions) commensurate with doing the job. Often authority should be put in writing--as a minimum--all concerned should be notified. (6:68-70)

We must remember that we are still held accountable for what we delegate. (6:68)

A subordinate should only be accountable to the one, who delegates the responsibility and authority. (6:83)

We should insist that subordinates keep us informed about progress and problems but not to the extent of routine, boring, reports. (5:48)

We should show restraint and be willing to accept variations, and quality differences in how the delegated tasks are accomplished. We should also be prepared for mistakes and for less than perfection. (6:140)

We should always pass on to our subordinates the praise due them for a job well done. In no case should we claim the praise for their fine work. (13:17)

We should attempt to delegate tasks early in the day so that subordinates can get a good start, be kept busy, and ask questions if necessary. (25)

We must establish goals, controls, set deadlines and be prepared to follow up on any delegated task. (21:18)

Delegating becomes logical in many cases because the subordinates have more ready access to the pertinent information and are more closely attuned to the situation. (15:8)

Remember the key to good delegation is good communication and adequate training. (6:40)

We must avoid "Reverse Delegation" where our subordinates put decisions back on us. If they have the authority, they should make the decisions. (6:38)

A final word before leaving this discussion on delegation. Without too much imagination many of us could picture the snowball beginning to roll down hill to the last man at the bottom of the organizational chart. The point which should keep this from happening and that I would like to key on, is that delegation is merely a means of equalizing the work load among members accomplishing a team effort and not a means of getting out of all our work. (6:152)

Refusing Delegation from Above

Learning to say "NO" is a very effective time saver indeed. The question is, how to get away with it? When we get right down to it, it's not that hard to say nor is it difficult for our peers or superiors to accept.

The first rule is to be prompt, proper, and courteous when saying "NO." This should immediately be followed by a clear, logical explanation of why. Hopefully, when we do say "NO", we are already booked up with priorities and can explain how if we failed to say "NO" these other priorities would suffer as well as us being unable to do a fair and just job on what was requested. We should merely explain that there will be delays elsewhere. Furthermore, we should determine if the person with the request will carry the responsibilities for any delays.

The above factors multiply when a request is for a rush project. Not only do we face delays on other priorities, but we're not sure whether other needed key staffers are available, whether the data or necessary equipment is on hand, whether our group is willing to give the extra needed to finish within the time constraints, or whether in fact there is anything at all to gain from all the rush. In many such cases we might be more prudent to say, "I can't finish by 1700 tomorrow, but I can give you by that time, and by noon the next day," or "will you take a rough draft instead?" (9:7)

This concludes a condensed approach to effective time management. In the short time required to scan these pages the reader should have grasped the significance of the time crunch facing us as Air Force managers. Each reader should have realized how he wastes time, how he can start to plan and organize his life, and most importantly, he should have absorbed methods and techniques to better manage that most precious resource -- time.

The remaining appendices contain additional time management techniques and a self evaluation check list that didn't logically fit the scheme of the other major topics discussed so far. I feel the time spent in scanning these appendices will further benefit the reader's knowledge of effective time management. Good luck in applying this newly acquired knowledge.

Yesterday is a canceled check.
Tomorrow is a promissory note.
Today is ready cash. Use it!

-Anonymous

END OF SECTION - Go on to Appendix A - Extraneous Time Management Techniques

EXTRANEIOUS TIME MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Try to find a new technique every day that will help gain time. (18:46)

Apply commuting time to planning, tackling problems, increasing vocabulary, learning a language (through cassettes), reading, or just relaxing. Twenty extra minutes each way per day amounts to four extra work weeks per year. (10:13-14)

Continually ask Alan Lakein's question, "What is the best use of my time right now? "
(7:117)

Review each day's activities to see how productive a day it was. (7:120)

Exercise a half hour each day to stay in shape, alert, and effervescent. (5:35)

Jog an extra 60 seconds. It builds endurance. (7:193)

Determine how much sleep per night is needed. The average is 7 to 7 1/2 hours per night. Too much may be detrimental. An extra 1/2 hour of being awake each day equates to 1 1/4 years worth of extra awake time in our lives. (5:96)

Pose a question to the subconscious before sleep. Have a pen and paper near the bed to copy down the revelations. (7:68)

Try reading or working somewhere else for a stimulus change. (7:151)

Use "body English." Don't sit in other people's offices unless prepared for a long visit. If sitting, move to the edge of the chair. (2:36)

When reading, "case" the work for info on the author, when it was written, organization, etc. Then find meaning. In other words, search out the meat in the sandwich. (9:175)

Review a book on fast reading techniques. (7:141)

Take an occasional stretch while reading. (25)

Finish one problem at a time. (3:37)

Send subordinates home early if there is nothing for them to do. (7:69)

Reserve trivial details for idle time. (19:756)

Be punctual for your own and other's sake. (19:756)

Avoid clutter. Clear desk at night for a fresh start the next morning. (6:56)

Take a five minute break every two hours. Learn to relax. Breaks act as boosters. If possible, change type of work. (6:56)

The lunch hour is the quietest around the office. Use it to your advantage. (5:54)

Eat a light lunch so as not to get sleepy in the afternoon. (2:37)

It is more important who we have lunch with than what we have for lunch. (2:37)

Put "waiting time" or "windfall time" to good use by reading, relaxing, or doing an instant task which is a step towards completion of an A activity. (7:202)

Keep your watch 3 minutes fast to get a head start on the day. (7:202)

If one finds himself procrastinating ask, "What am I avoiding?" Then try to confront that task head on. (7:203)

Try not to think of work on week-ends or vacations. (7:204)

Try to keep small talk to a minimum during work hours. (7:204)

Review lifetime goal list every day and identify activities to do each day to further goals. (7:202)

END OF SECTION –

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